

THE CALCUTTA JOURNAL.

OR

Political, Commercial, and Literary Gazette.

Vol. I.]

MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 1821.

[No. 1

Letter from Persia.

A Letter has reached us by the hands of a Gentleman lately arrived at Calcutta, from Persia, dated Tabreez, May 10, 1820, from Mr. Armstrong, whom we had an opportunity of seeing at Isfahauon his way from Bombay to the Persian Court, where he was then going by permission of the Bombay Government to superintend the Military Arsenal of the Prince, Abbas Mirza. He had before resided some time at Tabreez in this capacity, and conferred upon the Persian Government, benefits, which money alone could scarcely ever repay; such as the establishment of a cannon foundry, a manufactory of gun carriages, harness, and all the necessary apparatus of artillery for field service, the bringing of coal and wood from the province of Masanderann on the borders of the Caspian Sea, the spreading of streams in a country remarkably destitute of water, the erection of mills for various purposes, and, among others, falling mills and other machinery for the manufactory of broad cloth, which has been made at them of a quality little inferior to that of Europe, with the training of artificers in various branches of mechanical art, and a host of minor services that would be tedious to enumerate.

The settlement of some private affairs requiring his presence in Bombay, he returned to that Presidency on leave, and on his second journey to Persia, brought with him many improvements in mechanical art, as well as an abundance of tools and materials for the furtherance of the great objects in view at the Arsenal of the Persian Prince. At Isfahauon, he made some stay, in order to instruct the Topgi Bashi, or Chief of Artillery, at whose residence in one of the ancient and splendid Palaces of Shah Abbas, in the Chihil Sitoon, we passed several days in his company, and had an opportunity of seeing him surrounded by the Heads of all the Departments of Works in that capital, who came daily to consult him on points of civil and military architecture, and every thing connected with mechanics, and who all admired his unconquerable perseverance, his patient toil, and the inexhaustible fertility of his inventive genius, which made him deservedly sought after by all who had any improvements in contemplation, whether in their public duties or their private pursuits.

We learn, however, from the Letter just received, that notwithstanding the debt of gratitude as well as the large sums of pay and allowances in arrears, which the Persian Government even at that time owed to him, he has received a treatment at their hands which places the hollow insincerity of their character in the strongest light.

"Since I had the pleasure of seeing you at Isfahauon, (he says) after your departure, I proceeded by the way of Hamadan towards my ultimate destination. The Governor of that place forcibly detained me, kept me a prisoner for three days, took all my baggage from me, broke open my chests, and took from them such articles as he thought fit for his purpose to the value of 2000 rupees, and then permitted me to depart. All the remonstrances that Captain Willock (the Charge d'Affairs at the Persian Court) was able to make on this subject to the Government of the country obtained me no redress whatever. My whole losses, including those on my leaving Persia and on my returning to it again, have been very great, to the amount, indeed, of 12,000 rupees. On my arrival at Tabreez, I was obliged to submit to the loss of six month's pay, and was allowed only one-third of my travelling expenses (which was stipulated to be paid in full), and even that portion of it I did not get until I was on the point of quitting Tabreez in the middle of winter. I have completed a Felling Mill at Khoon, and various other Works, at which both coarse and fine broad-cloths have been made, of a quality very little inferior to the English manufacture. The Prince is at this time 1020 tomanes (the toman being nearly equal to the English Guinea) in arrears of pay

alone due to me; and the only hope I have of ever being able to recover any portion of it, is in the intelligence we have received here of an Ambassador Extraordinary being on his way to Persia in order to settle some disputed points, and seek redress for grievances. This brief detail will give you an idea of the faithless character of the Persians, after all the favors and kindnesses they have received from England."

The writer concludes with saying "You are at perfect liberty to publish the facts that I have here stated;" and as we have every reason to believe them true, from the high character borne by Mr. Armstrong among all those who know him, for probity and integrity, we deem it our duty to make them public, and have accordingly done so, nearly in his own words, retaining the original Letter for the inspection of those who may question whether any Government could be so base as thus to requite the services of a Foreigner, who has laid the foundation of more internal benefit in their country, than all their bearded monarchs, from the splendid and munificent Abbas, the Philanthropist and Friend of his Country, down to the weak and effeminate Feth Ali, who now sits upon its gorgeous but tottering throne.

It may not be thought out of place, perhaps, to give here a few brief extracts from the Manuscript Notes of a Journey made through Persia, transcribed literally from the small memorandum books in which they were written on the spot, to shew the politeness of these same Persians, in cases, where the individual on whom their attentions are bestowed, is likely to be of service to them, or where he may be supposed to be favored and protected by the representatives of his nation at Court. Independent of its application to the particular point in question, it may be thought illustrative of the character and manners of the Persians in general, and therefore may not be without interest to those who like to follow the wanderings of a Traveller through countries they may themselves visit on their return to England. We shall therefore confine our extracts to the approach to and stay at Isfahauon, in order to include them within our present Number.

Saturday, Oct. 5, 1816.—The young lad Mohammed Ali, with whose party, my companion, the Derwish Ismael of Baghdat, and myself, had journeyed thro' the last day's stage, had been brought up evidently with extraordinary tenderness, and was treated with correspondent respect by his servants, who gratified all his momentary whims without a murmur. He was now so fatigued by a journey of two or three days, tho' he rode upon a pillowed saddle, that he was unable to go farther without a day's halt. As he professed himself extremely pleased with our company, and charmed beyond description by the long stories with which I amused him on the road respecting the strange customs of the Infidels in India where I professed to have been—he begged of us to retard our journey a day for his sake, and promised to take me to his father who was a great man at Isfahauon, and who he was sure would be delighted at the friendship which his son had formed for me, and insist upon my becoming his guest and remaining with him for a month or two at least. I urged the importance of my getting to Bushire within a stated time, as the route from thence further on was by sea, at which the youth expressed great alarm, and intreated me for his sake as well as that of my father and mother, never to trust myself upon so dangerous an element. He gave me the name of his father, Asad Ullah Khan, with the place of his residence in Isfahauon, begging me not to omit calling to see him on the morrow, when he hoped to arrive after us, as the first thing he should have to tell his father would be of the kind-hearted Hadjee from Maarr, (Egypt) whom he had met on the road.

We went from the Khan of Chal Seena in a S. R. by S. direction, along a barren road, having a wide plain on our left, bounded by a distant and even range of mountains faintly seen like a bed of blue haze by the light of the moon, and on our right a succession

of steep, ragged, and detached slate hills, following each other in a line close to and in the direction of the road. We neither saw a dwelling nor heard the sound of any living being for nearly five hours, when we passed on our left the village of Nourishan, with an apparently new and exceedingly neat caravanserai there.

From hence we came on cultivated ground, with water and trees, and the day promised to expose to us an improved scenery. The opening of the morning was one of the most beautiful that I ever remember to have witnessed; while the pale light of the moon was yet visible in the west, after her sinking below the horizon, the eastern sky was already warmed with the blush of the sun's approach, at the same time that the zenith showed a deep azure canopy, studded with the brilliant retinue of the Pleiades, Alderbaran, Orion's belt, and Jupiter, in all their united splendour.

We had now on each side of our road, corn fields of the third crop during the present year, some in all the fresh green of early spring, and others in the mellow maturity of autumn, with gardens and trees in great variety and abundance, all watered by numerous canals leading in every direction.

The ruined outskirts of Isfahan already began to appear, and presented a melancholy picture of desolation and devastation. Long streets and large buildings, the interior of which preserved all their original freshness, some indeed seeming to have been scarcely ever inhabited, were now abandoned to utter desolation, and were the haunts only of the solitary raven. We went for nearly two hours through a succession of this ruined scenery, which could not be witnessed without exciting the most powerful emotions of melancholy.

The rising sun presented us, however, with a fine and extensive landscape, as its rays gilded the enchanting picture of the plain of Isfahan, with its mountain boundaries, and the world of interesting objects which they enclosed, contrasting thus the permanent beauties of Nature, with the more unstable works of man.

Among the peculiar objects which attracted my notice, were a number of large circular towers, sloping a little upward from the base, and finished with ornamented tops, in a style very different from Saracen, rising in the centre of gardens, and seeming like so many castles. These I learnt were edifices erected for the resort of pigeons, who were suffered to feed on the grain, the melons, and the fruits in the neighbourhood, and to retire to these towers to roost. The interior of these buildings, as I myself saw, contained some hundreds of separate cells for the birds, and I was assured that they were cleaned out every ten or twelve days, and the dirt carefully preserved as manure for particular fruits, when the fattest of the birds were taken away for sale, the eggs and young carefully attended to, and the whole managed with great economy and skill. These establishments are all private property, and belong to the owners of the grounds near, and the business is found to be an exceedingly lucrative one, tho' there are a great number of these establishments in the neighbourhood of each other.

We found the roads near the city covered with asses, who were laden with the dirt of the highway gathered up by scavengers for the use of the gardens near, so that manure is of more than usual value here; indeed where there are three crops of grain grown yearly, a succession of spring, summer, autumn, and winter fruits kept up, a constant supply of manure and water must be indispensable agents in the labours by which this is produced.

The gate by which we entered the present restricted city of Isfahan was of very mean appearance, exceedingly small, and its passages obstructed by trains of camels of nearly the same kind and size as the Arabian ones. There was also great poverty in the aspect of the few first streets thro' which we passed—tho' the space of wall between the shops was whitewashed and painted with the most grotesque figures in combat, in the chase, at athletic games, &c. all very gaudily coloured and badly drawn. After a few winding passages, we came at length, however, to some noble ranges of barracks, wider, more lofty, and better lighted than any similar places that I had seen, and where the shops were larger and better furnished than either in Cairo or Damascus.

We met here a funeral procession, which was not of the usual Muslim appearance, and indeed, I at first thought it to have been a Christian one, until assured of the contrary. In front of the train came eight or ten persons, bearing coloured flags over their shoulders, an enchanting bymn; next followed about an equal number carrying large wax tapers lighted, and to this succeeded the corpse borne in a close palanquin with double poles

or shafts on the shoulders of men; the apparent friends of the deceased followed in pairs, and a crowd of spectators of both sexes closed the procession. These rites are peculiar to the Shiæes, and are held in abomination by the Sunnites, though they are sometimes, I was told, practised at Imam Moosa and other Persian quarters of Baghdad, where the Shiæes are in sufficient numbers to defend themselves from the insults of their Sunnite masters, if such should occur at the moment.

We found, after some enquiry, a halt of comparative privacy in the Khan Mohur Dar Kooch, where there were but few travellers, and those chiefly Baghdad merchants. In this we found an upper chamber vacant, and soon made ourselves at ease.

Retired as we had hoped to have been, our room was soon crowded with visitors and enquirers, more particularly from among those Arab merchants who were waiting with impatience for news from Baghdad before they set out on their return there. This, tho' a sufficient evil at a moment of fatigue, and of first arrival as a stranger in a large city, led to the most agreeable result. In the course of these enquiries which we were justly entitled to make in our turn, we learnt that there was an Englishman halting here on his way to Tabreez.

As soon therefore as the host of visitors had dispersed, I dispatched a note to this gentleman, whose name I did not yet know, stating my arrival here, and desiring to know how far it would be congenial with his own wishes to promote an interview. An answer was very speedily returned, that Mr. Armstrong would wait upon me in person, accompanied by his friend Assad Ullah Khan, and in less than half an hour they came, attended by a suite of servants, to visit me in my humble quarters. Mr. Armstrong was an elderly person, who had been long settled in India as a builder, and general director of artificers' work, and had for the last seven years been employed by the Prince Abbas Mirza at Tabreez in the establishment of an arsenal there, the founding of cannon, equipping them, and setting on foot a variety of useful works of a military kind. His companion, Assad Ullah Khan, the Topgi Bashi, or chief of the Artillery attached to the King's Establishment at Teheran, was the father of the young lad Mohammed Ali, whom we had met with on the road, and who was in hourly expectation of the arrival of his son. Our meeting was a warm and cordial one, and after the first enquiries were passed, it was insisted that I should come and partake of their quarters, at one of the old Palaces of Shah Abbas, which had been assigned to them by the Persian Government during their stay here.

The visit of an Englishman, attended by a Persian Khan and his servants, to a humble Arab in a public caravanserai, raised, as was natural, a thousand conjectures, but on its being suggested that this Englishman might at a former period have received some kind attentions from the Hadjee, which he had the gratitude to feel and repay, all contradictory opinions were reconciled, and general admiration was bestowed on so unusual a character.

It was near evening before we left our quarters at the caravanserai to follow our friends to those which they had prepared for us at the Palace. We were there lodged in gorgeously magnificent halls, with whole suites of rooms, gardens, and delightful walks open to us on all sides, and the pleasure of this change was still augmented by intelligent and kind society, and the comforts of domestic life in a very high degree.

ISFAHAUN.

During a stay of several days, which we made at Isfahan, before any safe or convenient opportunity of prosecuting our journey offered itself, our whole time was passed in one unbroken succession of pleasures, during which I was so highly honoured, so constantly delighted, and in short so completely surrounded by gratifications of every kind, that I neither had nor wished to have a moment of leisure or seclusion to note the impressions which all the train of pleasure naturally gave rise to.

It was on the day preceding our intended departure only that I sat down for a moment to collect together the brief recollections of my stay.

October 6th.—The ancient bath of the celebrated Shah Abbas the Great was prepared for us by express order from Assad Ullah Khan; and his young son, who had arrived on the preceding evening, overjoyed to find we were already guests of his father, joined our party there. All strangers were excluded, the sisters were filled with

The clearest water, the bath had been well washed and highly heated, and every pains had been taken to render it as perfect as the fashion of Persia would admit. The style of this bath, which formed a part of the Palace in which we lived and was included within its walls, was similar to the one described at Hermapothab, except that it was larger, and more richly ornamented. The same general cleanliness, in the outer and inner divisions, the same arrangement of the cold fountains and hot cisterns, and the same process in the washing, &c. practised by the attendants, was seen here as at the place mentioned. The same deficiencies too were also observable. The servants of the bath knew nothing of the art of massaging the limbs and muscles, the visitor was led directly from the hot room into the cold with no other covering than two small coarse blue checked towels, and his feet were suddenly chilled by his walking on a cold stone pavement, without slippers or pattens of any kind, no bed was made for his repose on coming out, no person came to dry his body by pressure and a change of cloths, or to warm his feet by friction on the sole, and the 'salleons' were served, there was neither coffee nor sherbet to recruit the exhausted fluids. All this, however, was after the best fashion of the country, and it would have been useless to complain. Defective as it was, it was productive of welcome refreshment and pleasure after a long journey, and we were therefore content. After dressing in haste we returned to our own apartments, where a sumptuous breakfast was prepared for us, of which we all partook.

Information of the arrival of an English Traveller and his Der-wish, having been conveyed to Hadjee Mohammed, Hussein Khao, the Nizam-ed-Dowla, or present Governor of the City, we received at noon a deputation from him, who waited on us with congratulations on our safe arrival, an offer of all the services which it was in the power of the Government to grant, and an expression of regret that a messenger had not preceded us with news of our coming, that we might have been met beyond the city by an escort and by the proper honors due to the subjects of so distinguished a nation as England. Nothing could exceed the respect which was shown to us, or the politeness of the manner in which it was expressed. We were assured that but for an indisposition of the Governor, which had confined him for several weeks to his house, he would have waited on us himself in person; and we were desired therefore to consider this party, which consisted of five of the most distinguished Khans of the city, and a large retinue of servants, as a visit of the Governor himself.

I was quite at a loss to account for so much distinction being shown to a humble individual like myself, desirous too, as I was, of passing through the country unknown, and having therefore avoided every step which might draw us into notice. Mr. Armstrong, however, explained it, by saying, that Letters had reached both this place and Shiraz, premising the intended visit of an English gentleman, to both, in the course of his journey to India, which Letters he said came officially from the British Mission at Teheran, and requested that every attention might be paid to him. As I was personally unknown to any of the gentlemen who composed that Mission, and they had described the person in question to be a Traveller desirous only of acquiring information, and observing the manners of the countries through which he had to pass, it appeared probable to me, either that their Letters were intended for some other person, or that I was indebted to Mr. Rich, of Bagdad, for this kind exertion to smoothen my path.

The remainder of the day was passed in receiving the visits of other persons of inferior importance, such as a deputation from the Armenians at Isfahan, and individuals attached to the English nation by former service or benefit, after which we dined together at a late hour, and closed a day of much pleasure.

Monday, Oct. 7th.—At the early hour of sun-rise, horses were saddled for all our party, and Assad Ullah Khan, with his son, and some of their friends acquainted with the principal objects of curiosity about the city, were deputed to be our companions and guides for our morning excursion. They were desirous of taking us at once to some of the splendid palaces of the ancient kings, but as all was submitted to my direction, I proposed another line of march.

Isfahan is thought by Major Rennell, to be one of the places to which the Jews were carried in the first captivity, when the ten tribes were taken captive to Nineveh; for tradition says, that during the reign of Nabuchodonosor many Jews settled in the quarter called to the present time Yahoudiah. Abulfeda says also that Bontanger, when he destroyed Jerusalem, sent the Jews here, who built a town

which they called Yahoudiah—that Goffong was the most ancient of the villages on which Isfahan was built, and that Yahoudiah was built at the distance of two miles from it. Also that though Goffong decayed, Yahoudiah flourished by the accession of Mohammedan tribes, and its name still remained.

I was particularly desirous of making a minute investigation of the relative state of these quarters, and their distance from each other; and as their names had been already mentioned to me by report, it was proposed that we should first direct our route to them. A great deal of wonder was expressed at the motive which could direct a visit to such insignificant spots, and a thousand assurances were made that they contained nothing to reward the trouble of the excursion. No one dared however directly to object, so that the original plan was unaltered.

Goffong is the name of the raised quarter by which we approached Isfahan on the day of our first entering it, and includes all the space of deserted and demolished buildings between the village of Nourcheerwan and the present gate of the city then which we first came. It thus lies on the N. W. of the present enclosed town, and has been fully described on our passing through it. The tradition still held by the people is, that this was the original spot on which Isfahan was founded, and that even in the time of Shah Abbas it was inclosed within the walls. Of this latter fact there is however no decided appearance, and there is much more reason to believe that it was in a deserted state, even in Abulfeda's time, and rather formed a suburb than a quarter of the city.

Yahoudiah is, as the Arabian geographer states, distant from Goffong about two miles, and is seated in the N. E. quarter of the town. It is the present residence of such Jews as are here, though a large portion of it is also inhabited by Mohammedans. The present residence of the Governor is in this quarter, called also Tabarah, and here are seen a portion of the ancient walls of the city, with high round towers sloping upward from their base, thickly placed; and more completely Saracenic than any similar work that I remember to have seen in Persia. This quarter, which is now also in a very ruined state, contains the minarets and domes of some fine old mosques adorned with Kufic inscriptions in coloured tiles, a large Maidan or public square, now nearly built all over with small dwellings and lines of bazars, and many other marks of decayed magnificence. The style of the architecture both in the private and public dwellings struck me to be of an older date than any thing to be seen in the other parts of Isfahan, and the traditions of the people are that this was a place of the Jews' settlement under Bontanger, and that it is by far the oldest part of Isfahan now inclosed within the city walls.

All this was extremely satisfactory, as confirming the conjecture of our able Illustrator of Ancient Geography, but the living picture it presented as was in another point of view full of the most melancholy images. Nothing could exceed the misery and degradation in which the despised Jews seemed to live here. Their habitations were of the meanest kind, and their labours, which seemed to be chiefly in spinning and weaving silk, were carried on in subterranean cells like the the cordons at Mosul and at Bagdad, and which are seen in no other part throughout the whole of this city.

In Turkey, many of the Jews rise to distinguished consideration in the service of the government, and others become respectable merchants. At Acre and Damascus there are two striking instances of the former, and in Egypt many of the latter, both living in affluence and consideration, and distinguished only from the most wealthy Moslems by a grayer dress and darker turban. Here, however, and throughout all Persia, the children of Israel are looked upon as the most despicable of all human beings, until they are become really debased by their being ostentatious, and now perhaps merit, by their want of every virtue, that which was at first cast on them as an opprobrium on account of their religious distinction only.

In our return from hence we traversed nearly the whole of the central parts of the town, coming through long lines of bazars, wide, lofty, well aired and lighted, and filled with excellent shops of every description. They were as much superior to those of Turkey, in their construction, as the shops that composed them were larger and better fitted; and all the machinery used, whether in metal, wood, or other materials, were more neatly, ingeniously, and durably executed.

At the close of our ride we came out at the Maidan Shahi one of the largest public squares perhaps in the East, and more extensive than any which I remember to have seen, where

Europe or elsewhere. This Maidan is of an oblong form. On one side is a portion of the palace of Tamasp Shah, or as some say of Shah Abbas, in which we were quartered, with a lofty gallery supported by pillars forming a sort of upper portico, in which the monarchs usually sat when they received any crowded processions of embassies through the Maidan below. Opposite to this is the small but elegant mosque of Looli Ali Shah. At the southern end is the splendid mosque of the Shah Abbas, and at the northern the remains of an establishment founded by this same king for the Europeans settled in the city, of whom he was a distinguished protector during his reign.

On the wall of the porch beneath this last building, where a gate leads into some large bazar, and before which is a fountain of fine clear water, are several paintings of that king's time. Among these, the one on the right represents an European feast, in which women, wine, and music, form the prominent objects; it may be considered rather a picture of what a Persian would conjecture an entertainment must be where women and wine are not forbidden, than what such an entertainment ever really was among any class of Europeans except in a brothel.

The country had now been two successive years without its usual supply of rain, so that the fountains and canals which refreshed and adorned this grand square, were now chiefly empty. The arched piazzas going all around it, which had been formerly used as shops, and filled with the richest merchandises, were now entirely unoccupied, and the chambers of the upper gallery above those, which had once formed the quarters of the monarch's body guard, were now falling fast into ruin. The splendid parade of horsemen, and the train of royalty, which once filled this noble space, were now replaced by a few solitary moollahs coming and going to and from the mosques near, and some poor and ragged tents and stalls which, were scattered over its wide extent.

It was amidst these that a party of nearly three hundred people had collected into a close circle round a professed Story-teller, who, when we first saw him, was declaiming with all the dignity and warmth of the most eloquent and finished orator. We halted here, without a murmur from any of our party, as they seemed to enjoy this species of exhibition as much as we should do the pleasures of the drama. It might itself indeed be called a dramatic one, for although but one person appeared on the stage, there were as great a variety of characters personated by this one as appears in any of our best plays. The subject of his tale was from the wars of Nadir Shah, more particularly at the period that his arms were directed against Baghdad, and in it he breathed forth the haughty fury of the conquering warrior, trembled in the supplicating tone of the captive allured by the female voice of love and desire, and dictated in the fervid strain of remonstrance and reproach. I could understand this Orator but imperfectly, and was unwilling at the moment to disturb the fixed attention of my companions by soliciting their interpretation, but as far as gestures and attitudes were explanatory of the passions and incidents on which they were exercised, I certainly had never yet seen any thing more complete. Bursts of laughter, sensations of fear, and sighs of pity rapidly succeeded each other in the audience, who were at some periods of the tale so silent that the fall of a pin might have been heard. Money was thrown into the circle by those whose approbation the Story teller had strongly won, this was gathered up by one of the boys who served the calecons without charge to those in listening, and no money was at any time demanded, though as far as our short stay would warrant a judgement, I should conceive the gains of this popular Orator to be considerable.

A few paces beyond, we saw another crowd assembled around a little boy of ten or twelve years of age, who was singing with the notes of the lark in the clearest and most delightful strain. As we pressed nearer to observe the youth, all were seemingly moved to sympathise in his apparent sufferings. His voice was one of the clearest and most sweetly melodious that the most fastidious ear could desire, but the shake of it which charmed us so much at a distance, was produced by quick and violent thrusts of the end of the forefinger against the wind-pipe, while from the length of time which some of these notes were held, the boy's face was swelled to redness, every vein of his throat seemed near to bursting, and his fine black eyes were swimming in agony, and seeming ready to burst from their blood-strained sockets. Yet with all this, it was impossible to wish to interrupt such charming sounds. The Arabic music had always seemed to me, the Turkish but little less so, and the Persian, though softer and more winning than either of these, yet wild and monotonous; but here there was a pained, an amorous tenderness, and

a strain of such pure and natural passion in the plaints of love, which this boy poured forth to an imprisoned mistress, of which I had till this hour thought the music of the East incapable. We all rewarded this infant singer liberally, and admonished him not to exert himself to the injury of his health and powers, for the ears of a crowd to whom sounds of less expressive sweetness would be sufficiently gratifying.

It was past noon when we returned, by which time an elegant repast of sweetmeats, fruits, some light dishes and tea, were served up for us in the apartments of the Khan Assad Ullah, in a quarter of the same palace which we ourselves occupied, and the rest of the day was passed in all the variety of pleasures which our entertainers could procure for us after the fashion of the country.

Tuesday, October 8.—The young Mohammed Ali, who had been brought fresh from his mother's lap in the harem to meet his father here at Isfahann, to-day commenced his military exercises, as it was intended to bring him up also to the station of a Topgi Bashi, which his father now occupied. Two Russian soldiers who were here, were employed for this purpose, and their first efforts were directed to learn the young Recruit to march. The boy was dressed in a short blue jacket with red cuffs and collar, in the European mode, but still retained his full Persian breeches with English boots over them, and his black sheep skin cap; a naked sword was placed by his side, thrust through a waist shawl, so that altogether the lad made a fierce but sufficiently singular figure; the father consoled himself with a hope, however, that when I sent him from Bombay, a helmet as worn by our dragons, and a pair of gold epauletts, the military decorations of his son would be complete, and till then, said he, we must be content with an approximation to perfection. Of the Russians who were employed to train this youth, one was a trumpeter and sounded a march on the bugle horn as he walked before, the other came by the boy's side and directed his infant steps, and in this way they paraded for more than an hour through the gardens and avenues of the palace which we inhabited, to the gratification of numerous spectators who bestowed their applause at every turn.

At the termination of this fatiguing exercise to a youth who had perhaps never walked for so long a time at any period of his life before, he was permitted to sit in the presence of his father and several other Khans, at a respectful distance, and we all bestowed our praises on the steadiness of his attitude and the firmness of his step. So successful a completion of this first effort in his military career, ought not, said all present, to go unrewarded, and reference was made to the father for the choice of the remuneration to be bestowed. "As the exercise was manly, so also should the pleasure be," said the parent;—and accordingly a young Georgian female was assigned to him as his reward. An entertainment followed, of a description not be easily depicted without offending decorum.

It was past noon when we quitted these sumptuous halls, where the voice of pleasure and the reign of luxury that had once enslaved monarchs now no more, had re-assumed their enchantments over humbler but not less passionate beings, and the fresh air of an evening ride was sought by the Persians as much as a restorative to exhausted nature as a relaxation from more turbulent enjoyments. After going through some of the gardens near our own residence, we directed our course towards Julfa, the quarter occupied by the Armenians, and situated in the S. W. part of the city. In our way to this we crossed the bed of the Zeinderood River, which was now entirely dry. This want of water was felt as one of the most serious evils that had afflicted Isfahann for many years, and not only the appearance of every thing was changed thereby, but a scarcity and dearth of every species of provisions had followed, which was felt by almost every class of the citizens.

The bridge by which we crossed this river, as well as several others thrown over the stream, and seen by us in passing both on our right and left, was the work of Shah Abbas the Great, to whom almost all the improvements and embellishments of Isfahann are ascribed. None of these works are arched in the way that bridges usually are, but form a sort of elevated road continued in a straight line of a perfect level across the stream. The foundations and support to this road, however, are a series of pointed arches with fine paved platforms between them, so that while the stream has free passage through the arches and under the platform, there is a fine promenade on the raised way running along them.

The road of the bridge is sufficiently wide to admit the passage of perhaps ten horsemen abreast, is well paved, has a high wall adorned with arched recesses on each side, and beyond these a

covered way for foot passengers, with small chambers of repose, and fountains for the thirsty at intervals. The platform of the basement is constructed of large hewn stones, and the upper part of good masonry in burnt bricks; the style of the architecture is Saracenic throughout, though the ornaments of coloured tiles are purely Persian. As a whole, indeed, whether viewed from a distance or in passing over it, it seemed to me equal to some of our bridges across the Thames, making due allowance for the difference of site in the architecture, and the form of the work itself, and was decidedly superior to any similar building I had seen in the East.

Immediately before us, as we entered on the garden land beyond the bridge, was a high and broken mountain hanging over the quarter of Jaffa, half way up the side of which was pointed out a ruined temple of the ancient Persians, and above this a large excavation in the face of the rock seemingly intended for the site of some extensive work abandoned before completion. Still to the west of this, on another hill, was seen a similar temple of the fire worshipers of antiquity, and above it, on the summit of a pointed peak, a larger work, which was called a fort, but which none of our party could particularly describe.

The view on all sides was beautiful; from the richness of the plain, the profusion of gardens, and the domes and towers of mosques and palaces rearing their heads from amidst verdant groves of poplars, sycamores, and graver cypresses of the most noble size, while the mountain boundaries of this enchanting view gave a grandeur and magnificence to the whole not to be described. In about an hour, as we lithered, turned, and halted on our way to enjoy the scenery by which we were surrounded, we entered Jaffa, which we found in a state of as great desolation and decay as all the other outskirts of this declining capital. There was nothing peculiar in the appearance of the place, as the streets were narrow, the houses enclosed within dead walls, and a general air of poverty and dejection prevailed both over the dwellings themselves, and the countenances of those who inhabited them.

We alighted at the house of the Bhaas, who had been apprised of our intended visit, by a messenger preceding us, and we were received by himself and his superior clergy with every mark of respect. We were first shown into the principal church, as there are some smaller ones in the other quarters of the place. This was situated in a secluded court, in the centre of which, and in front of the church itself, was an open square edifice of three or four stories, the lower ones of which were seemingly used as kiosques, and the upper contained two large bells for summoning the congregation to worship, a privilege which the Armenians do not enjoy in Turkey. The church, though small, was richly adorned with all the pagantry of Christian state, the walls were covered with inferior paintings of subjects from the tales of Scripture, the pavement of the floor was spread with carpets, and the dome of the roof was ornamented in the Persian style, with enamelling of gold and colours, while the effect of the whole was improved by a blaze of light, surrounding the image of the Saviour, on the altar of their devotions.

This church, we were assured, was the work also of Shah Abbas, who seems, among all his other traits of high and noble character, to have been the most tolerant monarch towards those of another religion that ever sat on the Persian throne. To this sovereign they ascribed several important privileges which had been taken from them at his death; but since that period, with the general decline of the empire, and more particularly of its proud capital, they had been declining in wealth and numbers till there were now not more than three hundred families left, and these, from constant oppression, all of the poorest class.

In our reception at the Bishop's house, to which we retired from the church, we were treated after the Turkish manner, with preserved fruits, sweetmeats, sherbet, omelets and coffee, and perfumed with rose water on our departure. The language of the party was also Turkish, as none of them spoke Arabic, and I could not yet maintain a Persian conversation without an interpreter, tho' I Arabic I met with no Persians who could even detect my being a stranger.

A certain merchant, named Galistan, who acts as the agent of the English here, having prepared an entertainment for us at his house, we repaired thither, and were served with a repast nearly in the English manner, except that we partook of it on the ground instead of having tables or chairs. Bowls of Shiraz wine were emptied and replenished in quick succession, as the Christians here make an extravagant use of that privilege of their religion as elsewhere, and not an hour had elapsed after the coffee or cloth was removed, before many of the party were in highly excited spirits.

A native musician, who played on a kind of guitar, was called in to add to the pleasures of our entertainment, but though he sang to us the amours of Laila and Mejnoun, and some others of the most popular songs of Persia, his strains were harsh, and his accompaniment inharmonious.

It was nearly sun-set, when we mounted our horses to return, and as the freshness of the evening air was delightful, we still lingered to prolong our ride, so that we were as tardy in our coming home, as we had been in our going out, and the remainder of the evening was passed in our apartments in a long theological discussion, of which the Persians seem exceedingly fond when those of a different religion to their own happen to be in company. It was conducted, however, with a good humour and forbearance that almost implied a very take-it-easy interest in the result, and seemed rather an exercise of argumentative talent, than an effort to convert from supposed errors to any particular belief of truth.

Wednesday, Oct. 9.—To-day was fixed on for our returning the visit of the Governor, which he had paid by deputation in consequence of his inability to quit his residence, and preparations for that purpose were made at an early hour.

The attention of the Topgi (Bashi) was taken up as on the preceding day, in witnessing the military tuition of his son, and as the father was quite as well pleased as before, with his tractability, the same reward was bestowed on his success, and the same scenes of paternal and filial debauchery took place to-day, as were witnessed in the halls of departed grandeur yesterday.

It was about ten o'clock when we mounted at the gate of our palace, forming a party of about thirty persons, including the guards who preceded, the Khans who accompanied, and the servants who followed us. Mr. Armstrong, however, who was briefly employed in constructing the model of a corn mill for the government, and whose useful labours, these public attentions shown to me had already interrupted, found means to excuse himself from accompanying us, and in consideration of the motives which urged it, no one could complain. The route of our cavalcade was partly through the quarter of Juharra or Yaboudiah, in which we saw a number of very old deserted mosques which had before escaped our attention. The minarets of these were different from any others that I ever remember to have seen. They were extremely lofty, constructed of a plain brick masonry of the best kind, and rose like a colossal pillar from the ground, gradually but slightly tapering from the base, until about two thirds their height, where a termination was formed in a capital resembling the palm-leaved capitals of Egyptian temples. Above this was placed a smaller pillar of less height and diameter, completing the other third, so that the whole looked like a small column rising out of a larger one; the first capital probably forming a gallery for the Mexican or Aztec, and the second a higher one of the same kind, as from the loop holes, and windows in the walls, there was no doubt a winding passage inside up to the top.

These minarets were all lofty, mostly single, and generally of plain brick work, whereas in the other quarters of Jaffa, the minarets are all low, are mostly placed in pairs on each side of entrance gateways, and are all coated with coloured tiles, besides having a tiled gallery with a roofed covering at the top, in an entirely different manner. The style of architecture in the mosques to which these singular minarets were attached, though Saracenic in its order, was different in its general aspect and details from the other quarters of the city, and evidently of a more ancient date; but from a want of sufficient leisure and privacy to examine the inscriptions, their precise date was unknown to me. All, however, concurred in the tradition that this quarter was by far the most ancient of any now included within the limits of Jaffa, and every appearance indeed supported it.

We reached the Palace of the Governor at the hour of the morning Divan, and the outermost courts were crowded with the horses and servants of those who attended it. After passing through some agreeable gardens, fountained squares, and dark passages, we at length reached the room of state. There were assembled here a considerable number of persons of distinction, all of whom rose at our entering; and the Governor himself, who placed me immediately beside him on his left hand, pointed to a stick with which he was obliged to support himself while walking, as an apology for his not showing me that mark of respect which he acknowledged as my due. There was in all this an excess of honourable distinction which I could not understand, and which I will believe must here been destined for another, tho' all my enquiries led to no satisfactory explanation on that point.

The room in which we sat, opened on a square court, in which were garden beds, flowers, rows of trees, and overflowing fountains filled with trout. From this apartment went a suite of others behind it, all decorated in the richest way, with mirrors, paintings, and gold enamelled work in the Persian style, and of the age of the splendid Shah Abbas. The furniture of these rooms, as of all others that I had yet seen in Persia, consisted simply in carpets. These were indeed of the finest and softest kind, as well as exceedingly beautiful, but there were neither sofas nor cushions of any kind as used in Turkey and Arabia. The Persians of all classes and distinctions kashf and sit back on their heels, preserving their bodies in an upright posture, and holding their hands across their girdles or on their knees, so that cushions are not necessary. This, however, is an attitude only used by Turks and Arabs before their superiors, and never by people of a higher class; or those at ease from the equality of their society, except in some parts of their prayers. The cross-legged mode of sitting, common to the Turks, is more easy of imitation by a stranger, and admits a greater change of position, so that lounging may be easily admitted, and cushions are then agreeable; but among the Persians I had never yet once seen this practised, either in circles of the high or low, and it was so far for me, therefore, that my Arab dress admitted of my retaining Arab manners, since it would have been impossible for me to have sat in the Persian fashion longer than half an hour without being incapacitated from rising again from so cramped a position.

The dresses of most of the people of distinction in attendance, were those commonly worn by Persians of every description, and offered no other variety than the quality of their materials. The sleeves and body of their garments are even tighter than those of Europeans, while the lower part from the waist downward is like an ample petticoat, open at the side, and according to my notions, is both undignified and ungraceful. Cashmere shawls are worn round the waist, in which a plain and generally strait dagger is placed, and the black sheep skin cap is worn by all from the highest to the lowest. An outer coat with sleeves and embroidered work round the edges is worn by the Khans and people in office, and this mostly of bright scarlet broad cloth, that being the established colour of the court dress.

In our conversation with the Governor, his enquiries were first directed to European affairs, and afterwards to the state of the countries through which I had passed, and his observations thereon seemed to me more intelligent than one generally hears from Turks in similar situations, though his knowledge of geography and statistics was equally deficient.

After an hour had passed, during which calicoes were three or four times presented, and passed from one to another in order as we sat, refreshments were brought in. These were placed in a number of large oblong trays, which were set before the company, so that as these sat on three sides of a square, close to the walls of the room, the trays, when placed end, to end formed one continued table before the guests, and were conveniently had access to by every one. Their contents were chiefly fruits in great variety and abundance, particularly grapes, pears, and melons, which are no where in the world perhaps produced in higher perfection than at Isfahan. Bread of the whitest colour and best flavour, cheese equal to our own in taste though different in appearance, salads of lettuce and other herbs, milk, cream, rice, sweetmeats, sherbet of pomegranate juice, cooled by masses of ice, and other similar delicacies, complete a feast of the most agreeable kind. Water was served to the guests for washing both before and after the meal, but coffee is not usually drunk by the Persians either in public or in private.

Before we retired, an offer of every thing that the power of the Qaveen, or his vizir of Isfahan could furnish us with, was publicly made, and a hope expressed that my way would be in every respect agreeable both to my health and wishes. A guard of honour was appointed also, to escort us back to the Palace of our own residence, and I was almost oppressed by these overwhelming honours shown to an humble individual who neither courted nor desired them. We passed our evening in a walk through the gardens of our dwelling, and ended it by a supper with the Naghi Bashi, and a party of his public friends.

Thursday, Oct. 10.—Horses and attendants were prepared for an excursion round the royal palaces and grounds, and since it had been agreed by the Khedive in attendance to be ready for our reception, Asaf Ullah Khan was, as before, our guide, though several other Khans with their attendants accompanied us. We commenced our ride at the Palace of the Chahel Sitoun, or Forty Pillars. The gardens around this mansion and leading towards it are all beautiful, the sycamores which line the avenue are large and ancient, the

eyebrows and fir interspersed throughout the grounds, have an equally fine though different aspect, and the slender poplars bending to the breeze give a lightness and airiness to the thickest woods. The fountains, canals, and walks, are laid out with all the taste and regularity of the best grounds of Europe, and in short every thing seems to have been in its original design as perfect as one could have desired it. The palace itself, tho' inferior to the gardens amid which it stands, is still a monument of the luxury and splendour of the age in which it was erected. In front is an open portico, in which three or four rows of pillars, about six in each, support a flat roof or canopy; the four central pillars, which are placed at the angles of a square fountain, have a device of four lions, each carved in a hard stone, for their pedestals; the pillars are all lofty, perhaps fifty feet in height, but disproportionately slender, the shaft is one solid trunk of sycamore wood, shaped octagonally round the sides, and lessening from the base upwards till it seems to be scarcely a foot thick at the junction of the capital. This capital rises in a square, increasing its dimensions from hence, like an inverted pyramid, and is filled on every side by the concave niches so peculiar to the Saracenic architecture. As these pillars have to support a roof of enormous weight, their strength is altogether insufficient, and not only their disproportionate height and slender form offends the eye, but the apparent bending of the parts of the roof between them threatens a speedy fall. The shafts and capitals of these pillars are entirely covered with silvered glass, or mirrors, sometimes wound round in spiral flutings, at others laid in perpendicular plates, and in others again enamelled over by flowers and other devices after the manner of rough work on polished steel. The ceiling of the roof of the portico is divided into square compartments, moulded and richly covered with azure blue and gold in admirable devices. The back part of this portico is one sheet of gold and mirrors, splendid as a whole, and containing many beauties in its minute details. Every possible variety of form is given to the devices in which the plates and smaller pieces of glass are disposed, and their partitions are frames of gold. Paintings of beautiful females, some sculptured works and marble inscriptions of highly finished writing, both of ink on paper, and of gold on blue enamel, with a hundred other details impossible to be remembered amid the overwhelming magnificence of so much labour and wealth, distract the attention of the observer. The hall into which this leads, and for which this noble portico is an admirable preparation, is, if possible, still more magnificent, tho' its decorations are of a different character. The size of the room itself, of whose dimensions I should fear to speak, is alone sufficient to give it a noble air. The domed roof is indescribably beautiful, and the large compartments of historic paintings that decorate its walls, defective as their execution would appear to an European eye, are yet full of interest from the portraits they contain, and the events to which they relate. Shah Abbas the Great, the distinguished founder of these kingly works, the restorer of his country, and the father of his people, is himself represented here, receiving the audience of an Arabian monarch, and the portraits of the most distinguished characters of his reign are pointed out by the attendants. As a banqueting room, scenes of war and state do not alone decorate its walls, but the enjoyments of the social board, women, wine, and music, have their full share in the pictured stories of the day.

We went from hence to the Royal Harim, called the Haft Dast or Eight Divisions from their number. The view from hence was on all sides charming, but on that where the building hung over the stream of the Zanderood, and commanded a view of gardens, bridges, palaces, and mosques, bounded only by the distant mountains, the prospect bordered on enchantment. It would be as vain as it would be endless to enter into a detail of all that we saw here—gardens, fountains, secluded walks, and ranges of apartments decorated in the richest most varied, and pleasing way, were the prominent features of this establishment. There were no large halls of state as in the Royal Palace, but the rooms were suited to the comfort of smaller parties than those which awaited the royal pomp in his more public banquets with men. The style of decoration in the rooms was less gorgeous, but from the delicacy and harmony of colours in the painted devices, the lighter gilding of the domes, and though more effeminate in character, it was scarcely less beautiful. Every one of these apartments had good fire places, in which the stoves of the smoke still remained; many of them had hollow work on their walls, executed in the most tasteful devices, and in such, as we were told, to give an echo to the voice of singers, and the sounds of music, and improve as well as prolong the tones of pleasure which once resounded here. Verses, names, and sentences, were written on

these walls in the Armenian character, and were most probably the work of such Georgian or Armenian females as had been immured here among the slaves of the royal bed; those, with many other traces of seemingly recent habitation, awakened feelings of a mixed and conflicting nature.

We were delighted with all that we had seen here, and went from hence to another Palace, similar in design and interior decoration to the Chahal Siton, and like it seated amidst the most beautiful grounds. The Hacht Bobost, or Eight Paradises, a name most appropriately given to that number of gardens, in which all that Mohammed or the Christian author of the Apocalypse have painted of a sensual heaven, seems to have been anticipated, detained us for some time amid its walks and bowers. The Char-Bagh, or four gardens, a work of the present Governor, Hadjee Mohammed Hassan Khan, the entrance to which is imposing from the long avenues of trees which it presents to the view, also shared our admiration. We had seen, however, so much to charm and delight us, and quite forgot one spot with so much regret, though to visit another perhaps still more beautiful, that we were literally fatigued with pleasure, and tired of constantly beholding so much splendour in art mixed with every thing that is agreeable in nature.

Our excursion closed by a visit to one of the Khan's friends, with whom we supped and passed the evening, having taken refreshment at almost every palace and garden at which we had halted. When we returned home at night, my sleep was interrupted by the confused recollections of all the overpowering magnificence which had pressed upon every step that we had taken during the day.

Friday, October 11.—It had been my practice in all large Mohammedan cities, where it was at all likely that I should become known as a Frank, by finding or mixing with Europeans there, to visit the mosques as early after my arrival as possible, while I was yet a stranger;—but here I was prevented from doing so, as I had scarcely set my foot in the city before I had become in some respects a Mohammedan into these hallowed sanctuaries, I ventured to express my desire of visiting them as a mere observer, to the Khan, who had been my guide to all the other places. Some anomalies were raised, not on his own account, but on those of the mollahs, who are considered a highly dignified race, and more particularly as to-day was the sabbath, on which the mosques were crowded both by them and the most devoted of the laity. It was at length determined as best, that we should go as privately as possible, and changing my dress for one of extreme poverty, with a pointed Derwish's cap on my head, a staff, and a long chaplet of green beads which I had brought with me from Jerusalem, made at the mosque of Omar, on the site of Solomon's temple there, I set out with the Derwish, Ahmad, my companion, on this holy excursion.

We went first to the small mosque of Louf Ali Khan, which is in the centre of the east side of the Maidan Shah. This is simply a square building over which is raised a flattened dome, without pillars, arched vaults, or alcoves. The workmanship throughout of the best kind, both in the masonry and embellishments. Large blocks of Tabreek marble, highly polished, are used at the entrance, and along the embellishment of the interior. The gilding, enamel, and painting of the walls and ceiling of the dome within, is equal to any of the halls of the palaces that we had seen; and small as it is, there is a great neatness and beauty in the whole. The exterior front, the portals and arch of the dome, and the outer surface of the dome, are all coated with painted and enamelled tiles, in which azure blue is the prevailing colour, and the inscriptions, with which the building is crowded within and without, are chiefly in Kufic and Arabic.

From the mosque of Louf Ali Khan, as this Khan is sometimes called from his having assumed the title of sovereignty during his life, we went to the Great Mosque at the southern end of the Maidan, which is dignified with the peculiar name of the Masjid Shah, or Royal Mosque. The lofty gate which forms the outer entrance to this, and faces the centre of the public square, has on each side of it a minaret with open galleries at the top, but these, though in any other situation they would be considered large, look here diminutive, from the noble size and elevation of the gateway which they guard. This gateway leads to an inner court in which are fountains for ablutions and large circular spaces of close grained stone filled with water for drinking. These last ring like metal at the stroke of the nail, and are finely sculptured over with devices and inscriptions in relief. The outer pair of folding doors, which are scarcely less than sixty or seventy feet in height, and of a proportionate breadth, are covered with silver; they are covered also with in-

scriptions, holy sentences, and characteristic ornaments in relief, and at the sistrum which meets the passenger on entering, are silver caps, fastened by silver chains to the marble, all of the most finished workmanship.

Around the court of the mosque are close vaults, for the devotion of the infirm or delicate during the winter, as the Temple itself is almost an open building. The ground plan of the whole, as seen from an elevated station without, is far from being regular, yet the want of uniformity is not apparent to the eye, either on entering or being within the building, and this has been as ably effected by the architect here, as it is at the Egyptian Temple of Philo on the eastern bank of the Nile,—at the principal entrance to Gerash by the Idne circular colonnade,—and at Palmyra, where one of the finest gateway has been singularly contrasted to harmonious diverging lines;—in the whole of these, indeed, irregularity has been made to appear regular, by the skill of the builder.

Nothing can surpass the rich yet solemn state of the interior of this Royal Mosque,—the vaults and embellishments, of the fine diaphanous marble of Tabreek,—called mollahs of arches—finely carved pilasters, and other portions of the same material, give an appearance of shapely and solid beauty to the foundation of the edifice,—while the lofty domes and spacious aisles have a grandeur not to be surpassed, and the rich decorations of the walls and roofs of every part, present one blaze of laboured magnificence, which would be too splendid—but for the architectural majesty of the edifice it adorns.

Around the mosque on three of its sides, and communicating with it by secret passages, are colleges for the studies of the learned and the education of youth. In these are courts with fountains, shaded by the finest trees, with flower gardens, fruits, and all that could render retirement at once cheerful yet undisturbed and favorable to literary pursuits.

We remained in this mosque for a considerable time, praying and counting our beads as we ran through the ninety and nine appellations of the Deity between them. Some of the Mollahs, expounded in Persian, Arabic verses of the Koran from an elevated pulpit, ascended to by flights of marble steps, often all of one solid block. With several Priests we exchanged the salutation of peace, while I endeavored to draw them into a conversation on some of the higher points of doctrine, but as they saw that our practices were those of the Shias Sect, whom they very cordially hate, all very promptly shunned us, which left us as undisturbed as we could have wished. The mosque at noon was crowded with worshippers, perhaps to the number of two thousand, some of whom offered up their prayers alone and almost in silence, while others ranged themselves behind Imams or leaders, and gave their devotions all the public solemnity of union. The beautiful parades of the Publican and the Pharisee could not receive a more striking illustration than from the scene before us, and the gorgeous splendour of the dome beneath which it was witnessed added powerfully to its effect.

Some of the mosques at Cairo are exceedingly fine, and preserve perhaps some of the best specimens of the Saracenic architecture that exist. The Mosque of Omar which stands on the site of the old Jewish Temple at Jerusalem has the noblest aspect from without. That at Damascus, which was formerly a Christian cathedral, is beautiful from its long avenues of Corinthian columns of marble. The court of the Great Mosque at Aleppo is perhaps no where surpassed, and some of those at Diarbekr and Bagdad have parts to admire. Not taken altogether, I have never yet seen, nor ever expect again to see any Mohammedan temple so truly magnificent in all its parts as this Royal Mosque of Ispahan.

The other mosques which we visited in the course of the day, were too inferior to this to merit a description immediately after it. Some derived their chief beauty from their size, others were small but exceedingly neat, and on all a degree of richness and expense had been bestowed which proved both the former wealth of the city, and the attachment of the people here to splendid places of worship.

We returned in time, after a long and fatiguing round, to say our evening prayers in the Masjid Shah. The crowd was not so numerous as at noon, and proved mollahs with their caping, pious, bearded elders, and a few frequenters, made up the assembly. The grave and hollow tones which reverberated through the lofty, cool aisles, and were re-echoed by the lofty domes, the dim twilight as the shades of darkness fast approached, and the silent passing by of bare-footed devotees, who were but faintly seen and heard, though their loose robes brushed us as they glided along.

were all striking features of a scene that inspired mixed sensations of awe and admiration.

Saturday, Oct. 12.—We had not yet seen the five colleges of the learned, which were among the splendid establishments of Shah Abbas the Great, nor visited any of the learned men of the day, and as we were still detained for an occasion to depart with a caravan, this duty was fixed on for our morning excursion.

We first went to one of the smallest of these Madresses, as they are called, and now almost the only one in Isfahan, where there are any students except those of the regular priesthood. It was an exceedingly neat establishment, consisting of ranges of chambers around the interior of an open square court like the arrangement of a caravanserai, but of a better kind. The court itself was laid out in fountains and canals, bordered by avenues of trees and divided by beds of flowers. In this court stood the tomb of Tekoa Mir Abul Cassim Fenderoski, an Arab of great learning and celebrity, and the translator of Plato, Aristotle, and other Greek Philosophers into his own tongue, as we were told. The tomb itself was of plain marble, simply inscribed in Arabic characters in a small tablet at the head; a spreading tree overshadowed it by its branches; and leaning against its trunk which over hung the tomb, was a small framed and glazed tablet, on which was beautifully written, on paper, an Arabic Ode in praise of the deceased, in a style of great elegance; but the author of which had also followed the common fate of the learned and the ignorant.

We reposed beside this tomb for half an hour, and listened to the moralizing strains of Ismael, who urged every thing he either heard, or felt, or saw, or even imagined, in support of his favorite maxim, that Pleasure was our only good, so that that we should eat and drink, since to-morrow we die; and if he was eloquent on common occasions, he was additionally so on one that presented him with so fine an illustration of what he called the folly of human wisdom. A young student of about eighteen, who saluted us as he passed, and from our manner of returning it joined us where we sat, aided the sententious declamations of the Persian by some fine quotations from the very writer whose ashes we had come here to venerate; and we found, from a prolonged conversation with this lad, that young as he was, he was deeply versed in the doctrines of Socrates, and was fast verging into that scepticism which is almost the constant result in these countries of premature and self-directed studies of a metaphysical cast.

From hence we went to the more splendid Madressah of Ahmed Shah, a noble work in its original state, but now almost abandoned, as there are only some inferior mollahs, who occupy a few of the numerous chambers around its stately courts. The outer gateway of this spacious edifice, which fronts a long range of gardens, is closed by large folding doors, which, like those of the Royal Mosque, are coated over with sheets of silver, on which devices and inscriptions are executed in relief. The interior court is laid out in fountains, canals, and gardens, in which large spreading trees yield an agreeable shade, and beds of flowers give the appearance of a constant spring. The ranges of chambers below, as well as those in the galleries above are conveniently adapted for the retirement of study, and have each of them the proper offices attached behind, for the comfort of those who may inhabit them.

As Assad Ullah Khan was still our guide, and we rode with a large retinue of servants, our appearance commanded respect, and indeed we every where met with it. Even here we were invited into the seat apartment of a mollah, and served with confections and cigarettes by his own hands. This man, we were assured after our visit, was one of the most learned men in Isfahan, though in a conversation which was introduced on the subject of the demonstrative sciences of astronomy and mathematics, as well as the less certain ones of chemistry and medicine, he hardly seemed to be aware that these branches of learning were better understood in Europe than in Persia. His geographical knowledge did not even extend to the relative positions of the countries forming the boundaries of his own. He straggled by the motions of the heavenly bodies were not at all familiar to him, though he knew the effects popularly ascribed to the conjunctions of the stars and planets. Chemistry and medicine were in no way connected with his studies, and his notions of both were that of a man who had neither heard nor thought of the subject in his life time. But in polemical divinity, the distinctive features of Shoaism and Shoaism, and in the doctrines of the Sufees, he was more proficient. He could recite some of the verses of Saadi, whom he called his favorite Poet, though he confessed at the same time his distaste of the other distinguished ones of his country. Of Arabic literature he was entirely ignorant, and the best historians of his own country were unknown to him, as I mentioned

the names of several, with the titles of their works, as popularly known among Oriental scholars of the West, of which he had not even heard.

The title of this man, as one of the most learned of his day, and the ornament of the colleges of Isfahan, might have been sufficiently well founded; but if this were admitted, as it was here without scruple, by all, the state of useful learning in the country must be deplorably low and degraded. The Mollah Hadjee Mir Mohammad Hossain was, however, kind, subserviently humble and easily polite in his manners, and there was neither pride nor affectation apparent in his behaviour.

We spent a considerable time with this man, examining some specimens of fine Persian writing of which he had an extensive and beautiful collection, chiefly made up of detached sentences and chapters of the Koran. We were served here with a noon repast of fruits and sweetmeats, before we were conducted over the college, and this, with a ride in the garden, into which its outer front opened, consumed nearly the whole of the day, so that we did not return home until sun-set, where a scene of more agitated joy was prepared for us, and a night of turbulent and noisy pleasures succeeded to a day of calm and tranquil enjoyment.

Sunday, Oct. 13.—We had been hitherto so occupied in our excursions around the city and in the sight of all here so hastily and imperfectly described, that the splendid Palace of our own residence had not yet been half gone over, and the more modern establishment for the present Royal Family attached to it had altogether escaped our attention. The first of these was one of the earliest residences of Shah Abbas the Great, and that which he is said to have been most attached to through life. Its large hall of audience which fronted a fine garden, has been already described. Its noble dimensions, and the splendour of its decorations, were in no way inferior to those of the Chelak Sitoon, and other buildings in the Hasht B-hesht; and tho' of equal or older date, it was in a much higher state of preservation than either of these. A large closed room led off from one end of this, which, as it was entered by small latticed doors, and afterwards solid double ones, was most probably a banquetting room of the king when retired with his females. The domed roof of this was particularly beautiful, the pictured subjects were appropriate to retired pleasures, the stained glass windows gave a rich and mellowed light, and there were balconies or galleries ascended by steps as if for musicians or singers. My own room communicated with the principal hall by three sets of double doors, and opened on the other side into a high walled court perfectly secluded from the highest point of view without. This was also said to have been one of the female apartments, which appeared extremely probable from its comparatively small size, the suite of its decorations, and the manner of its communication by double doors with the hall on one side and an equal manner of the same kind with the garden court on the other. The walls of this from the floor to the roof were of raised gold work on a blue ground, and the lower recesses were executed in the same way with devices of flowers, bushes, birds, &c. In the upper recesses which were separated from the lower by a rich broad frieze of gold ground with flowers, were a succession of historical paintings. In these, females were always the heroines of the story, sometimes they appeared in the chase, at others in the act of being sold as slaves, love and intrigue were depicted in some, and in one, the sight of a female bathing in a stream had checked the speed of an amorous Prince, who gazed on her with desire. The Story of Baharam Gour, or Baharam the Fifth, and his fair favorite, fills the last compartment near the door, and is perfectly understood by even the children of the country. This monarch, whose reign has ended nearly fourteen hundred years, has been pronounced to be one of the best monarchs that ever ruled Persia, the happiness of his subjects being his sole object during the whole of his reign. His favorite amusement in hours of relaxation from public duties was the chase, and in the indulgence of this passion indeed he lost his life.

Sir John Malcolm, in his visit to the ruins of one of this monarch's hunting seats, heard almost exactly the same story of his skill as an archer, as was related to me by a domestic who explained the painting of the subject on the walls here (History of Persia, vol. I. p. 119.) The monarch is represented sitting in a chair, while

* I should mention here, that Mr. Armstrong having brought with him a copy of Sir John Malcolm's History of Persia, which had reached Bombay just before his quitting it, I had an opportunity of reading this excellent work during our joint stay at Isfahan, and can bear testimony to the extreme fidelity of all its details relative to that capital, as well as to most other parts of Persia that I have visited.—Ed.

His horse is held by an attendant, and his banished favorite is seen bearing on her shoulders a large black cow, and with it ascending a flight of ten steps leading to an apartment above. The doors of this pictured room were securely made, neatly paneled, and the wavy grain of the overgrown wood of the country, imitated on a varnished ground by waves of gold. The windows over the doors leading to the garden were among the most beautiful of any I had seen in Isfahan, they were of the pointed arched form, richly carved in small hollow work of the most ingenious patterns, and the harmony of colours in the extremely minute pieces of glass which filled these intervals, was perfection itself. As the doors below were double, so were these windows, the hollow between the inner and the outer ones occupying all the thickness of the wall, or perhaps three to four feet. The outer windows were now spread over with paper, yet even in this state the rich effect of the light was inconceivably fine.

Behind this suite of apartments connected with the great hall were other courts and gardens, filled with canals and fountains, and surrounded by buildings fit in every sense to form the abodes of luxurious and powerful sovereigns, in all of which labour and wealth had been lavished, as if it seemed of no value or account. Large squares with open troughs for horses round them, and closed stalls within, extensive kitchens, and other domestic offices were attached to these, and within all, was a spacious court of nearly a thousand feet square—with empty fountains, broken pedestals, portions of a fine stone pavement that covered the whole, a range of noble buildings round the sides, and a square pile of more costly ones in the centre, all now deserted and in ruins. This we were told was once a Royal Harim in which were upward of three hundred of the most beautiful Georgian girls, besides the wives and slaves of other countries; and the magnificence of the establishment, the richness of its gilded, arched, domes, and walls, induced us to credit all that could be said of it in its original perfection.

The Palace erected for the present monarch, Fath Ali Shah, is the work of a builder named Agha Bazaar, who was himself our guide over it. It has not been completed more than four years, and was altogether done at the expense of the present Governor of the city, Hajji Mohammed Husein Khan, as a tribute to his sovereign. It is said to be by far the best Palace of his time in all the country, and far superior to any of the Royal residences at Teheran, Tabriz, Kirmanshah, or Shiraz; far though all the remains of departed grandeur here are the property of the King, it is the fashion of this country not to inhabit the palaces of their ancestors, so that often excellent edifices are destroyed to erect inferior ones on their site.

This Palace is in the general style of the plainest of the old ones here; and is furnished with spacious courts and gardens, fountains, canals, and trees. It is only less costly, less gorgeous, and less overpowering in splendour. The apartments are laid out on nearly the same plan, and are adorned in a very similar way. Some few paintings of Georgian youths of both sexes are seen, with portraits of Jamshed and other distinguished ancestors, and of George Khan, and some other moderns. The portrait of the King himself, however, occupies the chief room in every apartment, sometimes on the chair or throne of state; at others in the divan, surrounded by his sons and some officers of state. The portraits are all alike, and are said to be admirable likenesses; they are executed as well as any of the older paintings of Isfahan. As all these rooms are newly carpeted, the work fresh, and every thing in perfect order, there is greater pleasure in witnessing this effort of recent labour, than in traversing the decaying halls of more splendid days, though almost every part, both of the architecture and the details, bespeak a decline of art in the country.

The monarch has resided here, it appears, at three different periods for short times only, but though he admires the situation, the climate, the productions, and the former greatness of Isfahan which he might have it in his power to restore greatly by his residence here—as regards to his personal safety he said to make him prefer the bad air, bad water, and otherwise disagreeable station of Teheran, where he has secured his treasure by strong walls, is near his own tribe of the Kijars for support in case of rebellion, and has behind him, impenetrable forests to escape to, in the event of those betraying him. Whether these be his motives or not, such is the general opinion of his subjects here, who do not scruple to pronounce it oppressive, and inveigh both against his boundless avarice, his oppressive government, the corruption of his inferior agents, and his own personal cowardice.

The whole of Isfahan being seated on a perfect plain, with no one eminence throughout its whole extent, we had as yet enjoyed no command in view of it as a whole, from any one part of the numerous rides that we had taken around it. The most elevated building in the city, excepting only the domes and minaret of the mosque, was fortunately a part of the very palace we inhabited, and stood at the end of a walled passage of about a thousand feet in length, leading directly from the court of my own apartment eastward toward the Maidan.

This building is called Ali Kauser, or Ali's Gate, from the Turk kish, the lower gate of it having been brought from the tomb of Ismael Ali at Nejef: it is a lofty square pile of five stories in height, with a flat terrace on the top. As the Chief Builder, Agha Bazaar, was always near, from his assisting Mr. Armstrong in his labours, and this with all the other public edifices was in his custody, we expressed a desire to ascend there, and take our evening coffee and caissons, which was granted to us with all readiness.

The eastern front of this building occupies the immediate centre of the west side of the Maidan Shah, looking directly over that extensive space, and opening into it, and its western or back front led by the walled passage described, directly to our own residence. We ascended it on the inside by narrow stair-cases, the steps of which had been all eased with coloured tiles, and the walls and ceilings every where richly painted. After passing a number of small apartments and irregular passages, we came on the third story to the noble balcony or portion, which overlooks the Maidan, and in which the Sovereign used to sit to receive processions, embassies, or other large assemblies, as they appeared before him in the square below. This portion resembles in its general aspect that of the Chahel Sison, and the pillars are of the same number and description.

After so long waiting for an occasion of departing with a caravan from hence for Shiraz, in vain, we had determined to set out on the morrow alone, and trust, as we had done before on similar occasions, to our own vigilance and union for our safety.

Monday, October 14, 1816.—Having closed my Letters to Mrs. B. in England, Lady H. S. in Syria, and Mr. R. at Bagdad, and taken a moonlight breakfast with the friends who had so hospitably entertained me at Isfahan, we mounted our horses for departure at day-light. The Faqueer Zain-el-Abideen had now left us, since a revival of the passion, which he had gone on a pilgrimage to a shrine, would not suffer him to quit again the favored abode of his mistress, who he assured us had taken pity on him since his return, and made him vows of eternal fidelity, tho' her husband still held her in bondage. The Persian Jew, however, still remained with me, and tho' he was evidently averse to our setting out on the journey alone, he made a loud defiance to all dangers as he buckled on his sword.

Mr. Armstrong insisted on accompanying us out of the city, and the Tongi Bashi, Assad Ullah Khan, who was prevented from doing us this intended honour by his having an early engagement with the Governor, sent his own led horse, with his young son, Mahomed Hassan, and many servants to swell our train. At this, as I had now resumed my former character of an Arab Pilgrim, I would rather have dispensed with, but there was no resisting those kind intentions.

We went out through the Shiraz gate, passing through the long avenues of the Char Bagh in our way, and having gardens on each side of us well watered by fountains, canals, and artificial cascades, the trees in most luxuriant foliage, and full blown roses adding their perfume to the general breath of spring, prolonged to us late in season. Crossing the bed of the Zanderud by the fine bridge before described, we went out southerly, having Zulla and the mountains of the first temple on our right, and passed thro' a most extensive burying ground, where a variety of families were uttering their lamentations over a new made grave.

In about an hour we had gained a line of small hills, in a pass of which we filled our water skins at an excellent spring, as there was no water on the road before us, and enjoyed a last view of Isfahan, which, from this rising ground, and during the freshness of the morning, looked incomparably beautiful. It was here that our friends quitted us to return; the grasp of my countryman was warm and cordial, and the expressions of the young Mahomed Hassan were as kind as when we parted before at the Khan of Chah Bazar, tho' he said he had thanked God a thousand times already, and should continue to do so all his life, for our having so unexpectedly passed ten days together, after what both had thought a final separation.

Ahmedabad.

With a Drawing of a Mohammedan Mosque near that City.—Plate XVI.

To the Editor of the Calcutta Journal.

SIR,

I have the pleasure to send you the accompanying Drawing of a Mosque, situated in the neighbourhood of Ahmedabad, which suffered during the Earthquake of last year, together with a brief Account of it, and should you deem the subject worthy of a place in your esteemed Journal, I have no doubt it will prove gratifying to your numerous readers on this side of India.

A brief Account of the subject of the accompanying Drawing of Behar Uchost Kook-hee's Masjid, situated in the Suburbs of Ahmedabad.

The City of Ahmedabad, in the Province of Guzerat, now a dependency of the British Government, was founded by a Sultan Ahmed, King of Guzerat, about 450 years ago, and has long been celebrated among the cities of Hindoostan for the beautiful buildings it once possessed; time and political events have however contributed to reduce the city into a mass of ruins, while not a twentieth part of what we are given to understand was once its limits, is now inhabited, though it still possesses a considerable population of 60 or 70,000 souls. The only architectural ornaments which remained, were overthrown by the great Earthquake of the 10th of June 1819, and not a single spire of any height is now to be seen, although some, until that day, had withstood the violence of the elements for upwards of four centuries. The subject of the Drawing likewise suffered, but fortunately towards the close of 1816, an intelligent Officer of the Bombay Engineers made a Drawing of its Elevation in the most correct manner, for his own amusement, which, from the late accident, has become more interesting and worthy of preservation. The original Drawing having been presented to a friend, he has employed a self-taught Native artist, to prepare a copy, reduced to one-third, corresponding in size with the Plates of the Calcutta Journal, which is now transferred to the Editor, to give it a place in this very valuable and highly popular Paper. The artist has succeeded in his task with great fidelity, save that from the smallness of the design, he has been unable to preserve on so small a scale, the various rich and delicately sculptured ornaments, which run through the whole.

The Masjid is situated in the Bahadur Deopoor, now called Budeepoor, a short distance from the Shahpore gate of the City, and was built about 674 A. D. corresponding with 1469 A. D. three hundred and fifty years ago, at the expense of a Lady commonly called Beebee Uchost-Kook-hee, the wife of Malik Bahadur Deen Imam ool-moolk, who was Wazir to Sultan Mahmood Beg, the second King in descent from the founder of the City. The Masjid was famed for its superior beauty and shagging minarets. It is not of very large dimensions, and in this respect, cannot vie with the Jama Masjid, and some other mosques. When new it must have been splendid; the ruins of various places surround it, which once belonged to the building, and the whole was built entirely of granite.

The dimensions of the Masjid are as follows:—Length, 92 feet—Breadth, 36 feet—Height to the roof, 37 feet—Height to the sides, 22 feet—The minarets rose above the centre of the building 30 or 35 feet.

It was not judged advisable to mark the places in the Drawing in which the minarets have fallen; it is sufficient to observe, that they were shaken down to a very short distance from the roof, and the appearance of the Mosque is completely destroyed. The Earthquake occurred a short time before 7 p. m. and a gentleman riding in the neighbourhood saw the minarets fall without being aware of the cause, although its effects on persons differently circumstanced, was very extraordinary; there were three distinct shocks which succeeded one another and lasted several minutes, the first shock, which came in a south easterly direction, inclined the minarets north westerly, as the top ornaments of both, which were of stone, were found to have been projected in that direction, and in clearing the roof, which is 36 feet broad, the ornamental part of the extreme edge of the back of the building was partially injured in two places; and it is probable, had a second shock not succeeded at the time,

* Uchost Kook-hee literally means immortal woman; applied to the Lady who built the Mosque, from all her children being born alive, and surviving their infancy.

little more damage would have been done, but with the second, the stones of the minarets began to come down, one by one, and fell about the doorway within a few yards of the base of the building, and the third completed the ruin to its present state. The stones, in falling against each other, were dashed to pieces, and having come down separately, as if shaken from their beds, left no appearance of the minarets having fallen lengthwise, as might have been expected. In other respects the Mosque did not suffer much, but a very neat porch, in the grand entrance leading to the court, formed of pillars supporting a cupola, became a heap of ruins.

There were several shagging minarets in and about the city before the earthquake, but now none remain. The minarets of the Beebee's Masjid have often been shaken for the gratification of the curious, and was visited by European Gentlemen from its adjacency to the Shahpore Bagh, where they usually resided during the Marhatta Government. The party on such occasions generally divided, and ascended each minar, those indeed stood still, while one or two experienced persons in the other gave it a vibratory motion, by standing in the uppermost window, and violently pushing their bodies against one side. As soon as the minar began to rock, the motion was communicated to the other, without any part of the base of the fabric being at all agitated, in fact if it had, the grand arch between the minarets must have suffered; Strangers generally became alarmed, at the unusual motion, and were glad to descend as fast as possible.

Letter from Rob Roy.

To the Editor of the Calcutta Journal.

SIR,

I had, several months ago, the pleasure of seeing two of my very humble lays in your Journal, which finds its way to all corners, and felt proud to find they had been inserted in such a Paper. When a want of more interesting matter occurs, you may perhaps deem the enclosed original lines worthy of a corner.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

A staunch Admirer of your Journal.

N—, Dec. 1820.

PERSIAN SONG.

ROB ROY.

A Humble Imitation of the Oriental Style.

The bowers are all withered—the roses are gone,
The song is no more—for the Bahubath flows.
The thorns still remain,—but the blossoms are dead,
Dilara, Dilara.—Oh! where hast thou fled?

The Capbearer bring me the goblet no more,—
Say, has he forgot the red liquid to pour?
The air is all hushed,—but no music from Khoten,
Is borne on its wings to the dwellings of men.

The roses have faded—the Bahubath bed—
Because the red flowers of his passion are dead;
The Capbearer sleeps, for the grapes are all gone,
But, say, my Dilara,—why thou too hast flown!

The world is a desert,—a wanderer I,
Since the "light of my harem" hath fled to the sky;
Every flower in my Garden appears now a weed,
For the Rose that enthralled me hath died on the mead!

No odour, no perfume, now floats on the air,
For damp in the earth lies thy sweet scented hair,
No rubies now blush, for thy lips have turned pale,
Thou speak'st not, thou smilest not, thou hear'st not my wail.

O! I'll think on Dilara, when dark is the night,
Since her locks were more black, and her eyes gave more light;
To illumine my soul than the bright yellow robe
Of the wine coloured moon when it shines o'er the globe!

O! I'll think on Dilara till thought in me dies;
Of her dimpled smiling hands, of her love swimming eyes,
Of her form like the cypress,—her soft voice's tone
Like the mild breeze of spring o'er a silver lake thrown!

O! I'll think on Dilara, her breath of perfume,
Sweet as wind-stilled kisses from jasmine in bloom;
But my song shall be hushed—for the roses are gone,
Dilara!—Dilara!—oh! where hast thou flown?

ROB ROY.